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side of the valley, and shortly a line of mounted women and children descended the slope in front, making for our fire, which Sam informed me was their intended camping-place. We advanced to meet them, and Sam conversed in their tongue; interpreting to me that they had left Santa Cruz two days previously, and that Don Luiz P. B. had quitted his settlement on the island to sail in his schooner to Buenos Ayres; while the Northern Indians, encamped to the north of Santa Cruz, with whom I hoped to proceed to the Rio Negro, had no intention of marching until the ensuing spring. On leaving these ladies, amongst whom was a young and rather pretty girl, I lifted my hat in salute, which called forth a burst of laughter from the whole group, and cries of 'English, English!' amidst which we rode off to join the remainder of our party, who were crossing the valley to the eastward, having intentionally deviated from the straight route; and although Sam used every effort to induce Gallegos to stop at the Indian encampment, the latter wisely determined to proceed about a league further, knowing that a halt here would cause considerable inroad to be made in the stock of provisions, which, in view of the return journey, with perhaps an increased party, it was desirable to avoid. We accordingly left the sheltered valley and encamped on the plateau in an exposed situation near a lagoon, the ice of which had to be broken to secure a supply of water. The frost was keen, and the tent afforded but a partial protection from the biting wind; so that the economical foresight of our leader resulted in all the party spending the coldest night hitherto experienced by us.

During the evening we were visited by several Indians, [+3] bringing presents of ostrich and guanaco meat. I was pre- 57+ sented by the soldier with a piece of the gizzard (the tid-bit), which he had cooked on the end of his ramrod; but I must confess I did not appreciate it at the time, though later on in my journey I learnt to relish this and other strange delicacies. Amongst the Indians who gave us the benefit of

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only sufficient for them to barter their furs and feathers, and for the chiefs at the same time to receive their rations of mares, cattle, ponchos, yerba, tobacco, &c., allowed by the Government of Buenos Ayres. By the time we met them in November they had little to show of the gains of their August visit to Rio Negro except a few mares and gay-coloured ponchos. Hinchel, however, owned two or three head of cattle which were said to have been caught at the head of the Chupat valley, being supposed to be stray cattle belonging to the Welsh settlers. Some of the Indians had still also a little yerba left, and tobacco in plenty; and on the occasion of the welcome many were dressed in coloured ponchos, chiripas, and some in leathern boots. With arms they were passably well provided, guns and revolvers being in proportion of about one to four men. During the time that we were occupied in the ceremony the women of the newly-arrived party busied themselves in pitching their toldos; and shortly after we had returned to our camp, which was a little apart from that of the new comers, and appeared very small and insignificant when contrasted with theirs, the cacique came over, and presented mares, horses, and other gifts to the chiefs of our party; and a grand feast was celebrated in our toldos. Many of the new comers rode over, two or sometimes three mounted on one horse, and would, if not acquainted with the inmates, stop in front of a toldo and look in for a few minutes, then ride on to another, and so on. As these were mostly young men, their real object was probably to reconnoitre the young ladies. One, however, who, though undistinguishable from the Indians in appearance, and who looked like an Araucano, but was really by birth a Spaniard, having been carried off in his childhood from a settlement, brought over a pack of cards, and some of our party were soon deep in a game of siete, at which the stranger being a proficient, soon cleared them out completely.

Next day I paid a visit to Hinchel. He spoke no Spanish,

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the next chapter—the Indians began to arrive, and the hunting was resumed; only, however, when absolutely necessary. Some of the new arrivals proceeded to the wild cattle district, and managed to kill a bull, although—as before—an accident occurred. As my lazo was used to capture the bull, I came in for a share of the meat, which was divided amongst the people in our toldo; but it proved very tough, and rather nasty. Perhaps the palate, having been so long accustomed to guanaco, ostrich, or horse, could not relish meat of a coarser description; but the hide was invaluable for making maneos and other horse-gear. On the 7th of January a messenger arrived from Casimiro requesting me to send him some information, and stating that he was distant some three marches, and wished to wait some time to refresh his horses, &c. After consulting with Orkeke and Jackechan, we sent back a messenger to say that, 'As game was scarce now in the vicinity of Teckel, and all were more or less desirous of pushing forward, he had better make haste and join us, otherwise we should continue our march towards Las Manzanas.' This message had the desired effect, as on the 12th he made his appearance, with several other toldos, a few only remaining in the rear with Crimé, who was reported to be unwell.

On Casimiro's arrival, as he now possessed a good toldo, I changed my quarters to his residence, as agreed on at the outset of the journey. I was sorry to leave Orkeke, and the old man was very much grieved, a present of a revolver only troubling him the more, as he informed me that he had nothing to offer in exchange; however, my assurance that I did not give him a present expecting an exchange, as is customary with Indians, appeared to console him. The usual consultation of the chiefs took place, in which all the preceding arrangements were agreed to, and we remained stationary in Teckel until January 20. As I had by this time become well acquainted with the mode of life and usages of the Tehuelches, and was looked upon as one of them-

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784 them never to mention the name of, and to avoid all allusion to, the deceased, their idea being that the dead should be utterly forgotten, though they will add a stone in passing to the cairn of a distinguished chief or hero. The death of a
766 child is marked by a display of sincere grief on the part of the parents. The horse it has been accustomed to travel on during the march is brought up, the gear placed on it, even to the cradle, and the horse, thus fully caparisoned, is strangled by means of lazos, whereas in all other ceremonies where horses are killed they are knocked on the head with bolas. The saddle-gear, cradle, and all belonging to the child are burned, the women crying and singing. The parents moreover throw their own valuables into the fire to express their grief. These things some of the women who cry are allowed to snatch out, as a recompense for their services, but they seldom benefit much. On the occasion of the death of an only child of rich parents, fourteen horses and mares were slaughtered, in addition to the one it had been accustomed to travel on. Towards evening of the day of the event, previous to the burial of the corpse, a select party of old women marched in procession round and round
● [431] the camp, crying and wailing. Gifts were also sent to the bereaved parents by the chiefs and relations, as a well-meant effort to divert their minds from dwelling on their loss.

771 The religion of the Tehuelches is distinguished from that of the Pampas and Araucanians by an absence of any trace of sun-worship, although the new moon is saluted, the respectful gesture being accompanied by some low muttered words which I never could manage to hear. They believe in
776 a good and great Spirit, who according to the tradition
177 related by Casimiro at the place, created the Indians and animals, and dispersed them from 'God's-hill,' as he explained the Indian name of the down (page 93). I am not at all certain that this was not a confused combination of the story of the Creation, as told by the missionaries, with his own ideas. There is a great tendency in the Indian mind

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if I could repair firearms, and one or two very antique specimens of flint pistols and blunderbusses were produced, the locks of which were wood-bound. Half an hour served to set these to rights, at which the owners were much delighted, and offered me tobacco, &c., which however I refused, taking instead a hide to make a small lazo.

After bidding, not adieu, but *au revoir*, to my new friends, whilst strolling back I was called into a toldo where four women were sitting sewing mantles. One, who appeared to be of the Pampa tribe, old and ugly, spoke Spanish, and stated that she was formerly in the Rio Negro with the cacique Chingoli. She acted as spokeswoman for the others, three tall, buxom lasses, daughters of a brother of Quintuhual, who was Capitanejo of the party. They were gaily dressed in variegated ponchos, with silk handkerchiefs bound round their fine glossy hair, which was plaited into two long tails, and set off their clear, fresh complexions charmingly. The first question they asked me was where I came from. On answering, 'From the direction in which the sun rises,' they asked if it wasn't very hot there. They then asked if I had ever been above the sky; if I had not been dead one time and come to life again; whether Casimiro had not been dead and come back again, and various other questions of the same description.

After satisfying their curiosity to the best of my ability, and smoking a pipe, I received a message by Juan Antonio that Quintuhual wanted to see me in his toldo. Proceeding thither, I was shown to a seat on a poncho, and discoursed with the old chief for half an hour; at the end of which he made me a present of a 'jurga,' or, as the Tehuelches term it, 'lechu,' a sort of blanket made by their women, similar to the poncho, except, instead of two parts with an opening for the head to pass through, it consists of an entire piece. It was perfectly new, having been just completed by his daughters.

After a good dinner we adjourned to see the races, a great

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131 We proceeded to Inacayal's toldo at his personal request, where we remained until evening was drawing on, when cattle were brought up, caught and slain, and divided amongst the chiefs. Whilst busy shaving a piece of hide wherewith to make some gear, I received a message from Orkeke, whose fire was situated at perhaps a hundred paces from ours, that he wished to see me when disengaged, and after supper I strolled down, and found the veteran sitting loading his pipe. After a smoke, he invited me to accompany him to inspect his newly-acquired troop of horses, and show him which I considered to be the best. I picked out a young white animal that had belonged to Cheoeque's own stud. 'Very well,' he replied, 'take him; he is yours; I never made you any return for the revolver you gave me in Teckel.' Although I did not require the horse, it would have been insulting to refuse it, so I walked off with my racer in tow. This little incident is mentioned to correct the notion entertained by some that the greed of gain is a predominant feature in the Indian character.

133 The following morning we bid adieu to Inacayal and his people, and turned our horses' heads for the pass of the river Limay, which was if possible more swollen and rapid than on the previous occasion; but we all crossed in safety, although Casimiro's and my horse fell once, fortunately where the water was shallow. Everybody, however, got thoroughly wet, and a continual downfall of rain coming on, prevented all chance of drying our mantles. We marched back by a route lying to the westward of that we had before followed, passing under and amongst the high wooded mountains, on the heights of which every now and then we could perceive a condor sitting in majestic solitude, looking down on us like a priest from a pulpit.

000 About four P.M. the rain cleared off, and we bivouaced in a grassy valley, with incense and other bushes growing on the sides. Here, owing to the sickness of Graviel and another of our party, we passed a miserable time, not even

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622 At the risk of repetition, it must be said this man was the best Tehuelche, excepting perhaps Wáki, I ever had anything to do with; he was frank, honest, generous, sober, and in every way fit for a chief; a ready and skilled workman in all Indian trades, from breaking a colt to constructing a saddle or silver necklace; his only vice being gambling, but for which last habit he would have been the richest and most powerful chief, as he was universally respected.

[431] Orkeke also sent for me, and put into my hand a packet of tobacco for the journey, which he assured me would be long, tedious, and dangerous. I promised to ask particularly for his ration, and if the Government would not grant it, to make him a present myself. He wished me to return, but I pointed out to him that for various reasons it would be better not, so we parted, agreeing to meet in Patagones.

202 It may be as well to mention that if the post of chasqui, or herald, as he may be styled, be an honourable one, for which as a rule only the near relatives of chiefs are employed, the duties are sufficiently hard. The chasqui is expected to ride like 'young Lochinvar,' as fast and as far each day as the horse will carry him; he must not turn aside or halt even for the purpose of hunting, and unless an ostrich or other game cross his path may have to go without supper after his day's fifty or sixty miles' journey, while his bed and bedding are the ground and mantle. Of course endurance, sobriety, and reliable steadiness of purpose are essential qualifications, especially if the distance to be travelled over be great. And Nacho had always approved himself an excellent chasqui, and was an unerring guide even across the trackless travesia.

When the chasqui falls in with other Indians on the march, or an encampment, he is ceremoniously received and honourably entertained, and it is usually expected that in case of need he will be supplied with fresh horses to prosecute his mission.

The following morning at daylight another consultation